

Amendments to the Abstract

Please replace the abstract with the following amended abstract:

The present ~~invention disclosure~~ relates to a method for measuring the maturity or cell wall thickening of a sample of cellulosic fibre. The method ~~at least includes including the steps of:~~ a) exposing the sample of fibre to polarized light, [[; b]] capturing one or more images of the sample through crossed polar lenses and a compensator plate so that the image(s) include interference colours from the sample, ; and [[c]] conducting computer analysis on the ~~captured~~ image(s) ~~captured in step b~~ to determine the maturity or degree of cell wall thickening of the cellulosic fibre by comparing the image(s) to reference colour interference data. The present ~~invention also relates to an apparatus for carrying out the method. The apparatus including an optical light path for exposing the sample of fibre to polarized light, an image capturing means, and a computer for conducting image analysis to determine fibre maturity or the degree of cell wall thickening.~~